

**“European Security and Cooperation in the 21st
Century”
Susan M. Elliott
Remarks to the American Chamber of Commerce
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Thank you Dr. Wegen (VAGEN) for your warm introduction. Thank you also to Mr. Fichtner (FISHNER), Mr. Lutz, and Mr. Povel (POVEL) for organizing and inviting me to tonight's event.

I also would like to recognize my colleagues -- U.S. Consul General James Herman who is here this evening from Frankfurt. He is the leader of US Consulate General in Frankfurt which is the largest U.S. Consulate in the world.

My other good colleague here tonight is Colonel Glen Dickenson who is the Garrison Commander of our installation here in Stuttgart.

Colonel Dickenson is well known to most of you and does an outstanding job not only running our installation, but working closely with the local government and community leaders here in Stuttgart.

During my 25 year career at the U.S. Department of State I have had many strong and positive associations with American Chambers of Commerce around the world.

Promoting U.S. business interests abroad is one of the main priorities of all Ambassadors and U.S. Diplomats, so I am pleased that you invited me early in my tenure at the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) to speak with all of you.

I look forward to getting to know many of you during my time in Germany.

While my primary responsibilities at EUCOM are as the Civilian Deputy and Political Advisor to General Breedlove, I welcome the opportunity to support the business community in Stuttgart and the broader region.

The U.S. government values the economic and trade relations we have with Germany.

We also believe that Germany plays a vital role in stimulating growth throughout the Eurozone and across the globe.

Tonight the focus of my remarks is European security, but I hope to come back in the future to discuss the importance of our bilateral (U.S. - German) and multilateral (U.S.-EU) economic, trade and investment relationships.

Before I begin, I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. I am a career foreign service officer and have worked at the U.S. Department of State for almost 26 years.

For most of my career I have focused on Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

I served twice at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. The first time was just after the break-up of the Soviet Union. I returned in 2009, just after President Obama was elected.

I also have served in Greece, the United Kingdom – Northern Ireland, and worked on European issues in Washington.

My most recent assignment was as the U.S. Ambassador to Tajikistan, a country of the former Soviet Union which shares a long and rugged border with Afghanistan.

As a U.S. Ambassador in a country bordering a war zone and prior to that as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asia, I developed strong and productive ties with my colleagues in the U.S. military.

When General Breedlove offered me this position, I was pleased because it gives me the opportunity to work with my military colleagues and share my expertise about not only Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union, but also about how the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Diplomats work at home and abroad.

Tonight I would like to focus on European Security and the new threats and challenges we are facing in the 21st Century.

What I plan to do is give you an overview of the U.S. European Command's priorities for our engagement with our European allies and partners.

I would like to present not only the perspective of the U.S. military, but also discuss how U.S. diplomats and policy makers at the U.S. Department of State and other USG agencies work in tandem with our military colleagues to meet the global challenges we face today particularly here in Europe.

Last year (2015) was undoubtedly one of the busiest years for United States European Command (EUCOM) since the end of the Cold War.

General Breedlove said: "Our command has done an outstanding job balancing its focus between Russia, mass migrations from other regions and foreign terrorist fighters transiting through Europe, while maintaining our commitments to our NATO Allies and partners."

The security environment in Europe has become increasingly challenging since the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris.

New threats emerge every day and these threats are not just against Europe, they are global threats that Americans and others face around the world.

To combat these threats the U.S. European Command relies on its dedicated men and women to build and maintain relationships with European allies.

Our diplomatic colleagues who work in U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad are doing the same.

Under General Breedlove's leadership, we have developed a new military strategy which we believe is an organized response to emerging threats and security challenges.

General Breedlove's newly updated strategy, which we just released yesterday, addresses the changes happening here in Europe and helps our forces adapt to meet emerging challenges and ensure Europe remains whole, free, peaceful and prosperous.

In tandem, our State Department colleagues who work in our Embassies in Europe are supporting EUCOM's priorities and looking for diplomatic solutions to these new global challenges.

The EUCOM strategy contains six distinct priorities which we developed in response to the changing security environment.

What I would like to do is outline these six priorities and explain how we are working on them both militarily and diplomatically.

These six priorities include:

- 1) Deter Russian aggression;**
- 2) Enable the NATO Alliance;**
- 3) Preserve U.S. strategic partnerships;**
- 4) Counter transnational threats;**
- 5) Ensure postured and ready forces;**
- 6) Focus on key relationships.**

Let me begin with Russia.

1. Deter Russian aggression:

After Russia illegally annexed Crimea and problems began in Eastern Ukraine, we realized that the relationships we had developed with Russia over the last 25 years were changing.

We began then, and continue to work with our allies and partners to understand Russia's actions and deter future Russian aggression.

We believe that the Russian government needs to honor the commitments they made in Minsk to bring an end to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

In an effort to move this process forward, Secretary Kerry met with Russian President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov in Moscow in December of last year.

They discussed the steps the Russian and Ukrainian governments as well as the International Community need to take to resolve the situation in Eastern Ukraine.

Until we can fully implement the commitments made in Minsk, the EU and US Sanctions will stay in place.

Secretary Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov also discussed Syria and countering the threats from Daesh (ISIL).

They agreed that Daesh poses a threat to all of us. Secretary Kerry said "It (Daesh) is a threat to Syria, the region and beyond it.

Russia and the United States agree that you can't defeat Daesh without also de-escalating the fight in Syria because Syria is the magnet, it is the center, if you will, of the Daesh operations."

From our point of view, Russia has no reason to consider the U.S. or NATO as a threat to its national security.

While we do have our differences, we are not looking for conflict with Russia.

We definitely want to do everything we can to find diplomatic solutions to resolve our differences.

As Secretary Kerry said, "When the United States and Russia work together effectively, our two countries benefit, and we think so does the global community.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran, which the UN P5+1 (which included permanent members of the UN Security Council – US, UK, France, Russia, China – and Germany) negotiated, is a good example of this.

We now need to focus on Syria, countering terrorism and bringing peace to Ukraine.”

In order to resolve global problems and deter threats, whether real or potential, we need strong military alliances.

This leads to the second priority...

2. Enable the NATO Alliance:

We support and enable the Alliance and its operations.

For the last 20 years, the Alliance has operated in the relative peace of a post-Cold War environment.

Now facing two significant strategic challenges, from the East and South, it is essential that the Alliance rebuilds military capacity and capability to address these two challenges simultaneously.

We must work with our allies to develop strategies that will help the Alliance deal with these new threats and challenges by emphasizing integration and developing the leaders of the next generation.

We also will stand firm with our allies in support of a democratic and sovereign Ukraine, and in sending a strong message of reassurance that we will uphold NATO’s promise of collective defense.

In order to support and strengthen the NATO Alliance we must:

3. Preserve U.S. strategic partnerships:

An integral part of preserving our strategic military partnerships is to help partners develop capacity, capability and interoperability.

This is especially important for our Allies on NATO’s eastern flank.

We strive to sustain & strengthen these developments with the newer NATO members.

Europe truly is at a crossroads and the decisions we make and ultimately implement will determine the future security environment.

We are committed to ensuring our relationships with our European Allies remain strong and united in the face of today’s challenges.

As I mentioned earlier,

4. Countering Transnational Threats is probably our most difficult challenge.

We are cooperating with our allies and partners to monitor and thwart the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, but we need to expand and strengthen this cooperation.

To Europe's south, we see a much more multi-faceted challenge of ungoverned spaces & unresponsive governments resulting in an increased flow of criminality, terrorism and foreign fighters in and out of these areas.

This is not just from the Middle East (Syria and Iraq), but increasingly from Northern Africa (Libya).

We need to work together to counter these threats, especially those from Daesh (ISIL) and other terrorist groups.

As we saw over the holiday season, many of these fighters aspire to carry out more attacks like the ones in Paris.

Incidents, such as these, have served to increase our vigilance and determination to cooperate more closely, not only in NATO, but with the EU and other allies.

Preventing these attacks requires grand scale synchronized efforts of law enforcement and military on an international and national level.

Combatting violent extremism requires a multifaceted approach.

This approach includes involves sharing of information among law enforcement and military personnel as well as trying to identify and resolve the problems/issues that lead persons to join terrorist groups like Daesh.

The U.S. military plays an important role in this process which leads to EUCOM's 5th priority:

5. Ensure postured and ready forces:

General Breedlove's vision is for EUCOM is to develop high-priority contingency plans and support other U.S. combatant commands. "We must assure our partners with our presence, and deter our challengers with our leadership. "

At EUCOM, we not only work with our NATO allies and other European partners, but we also assist the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in countering Daesh (ISIL) in Syria and Northern Iraq.

In addition, we support our African Command (AFRICOM) in their efforts to combat terrorist threats like those we have seen in Mali and Libya.

One area where we also have worked successfully with our European and International partners is in stopping the spread of deadly diseases like Ebola on the African continent.

We believe there is simply no substitute for our forward force military presence in Europe.

It is the bedrock of our ability to assure our Allies and deter real & potential adversaries.

Over the past two decades, we downsized our military presence in Europe.

Given the increased threats and challenges, we now need to determine the appropriate size and composition of future rotational forces, as well as pre-positioned equipment to develop assurance and deterrence into the future.

In addition, we must work together to combat new threats like those in cyber-space.

Strengthening and defending our cyber systems already is, and will continue to be, one of the greatest security challenges we will face in the 21st century.

The last priority, but in my opinion probably the most important priority is to

6. Focus on key relationships:

In addition to maintaining and nurturing our traditional partnerships with the countries of Western Europe like Germany, France and the United Kingdom, we need to enhance security in Eastern Europe & strengthen ties with emerging alliance leaders.

This is vitally important and also should include developing relationships with the Levant & Mediterranean regions bordering Europe.

While Syria is not part of Europe, it borders Turkey, who is our ally, partner, and member of NATO.

The situation in Turkey continues to become more complex.

Turkey is a critical partner in degrading and defeating Daesh (ISIL), and we greatly appreciate the vital support Turkey provides to the international coalition to counter Daesh (ISIL).

General Breedlove said: "We need to remember Turkey is an important ally in the NATO alliance, and right now, Turkey is in a pretty tough place."

We must work together to resolve the situation in Syria that created the conditions for massive scale immigration of refugees that is of great concern to everyone in Europe.

As Secretary Kerry said when he addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos, “As we look to the year ahead, we have a unique opportunity to build on what we have achieved ... and a top priority is the conflict in Syria – to deal with the refugee crisis that it has spawned and the violent extremism to which it has contributed.”

This humanitarian crisis within Europe has no foreseeable end in sight.

This has complicated and strained regional bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships.

The U.S. is expanding its focus and response to this refugee crisis, the worst the world has seen since the Second World War.

President Obama has announced that we will host a summit on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly in September 2016.

This event will be the culmination of a rigorous effort to strengthen the humanitarian system for delivery of help, to secure new funding and increase opportunities for resettlement and humanitarian admission around the world.

As Secretary Kerry announced in Davos, “This will be a comprehensive effort for millions of Syrian refugees, but also for those from any country who qualify for refugee status.”

In conclusion, what I hope you have gleaned from my remarks tonight is the unprecedented complexity of the security situation in Europe makes it very difficult to develop a one “size fits all” strategy for collective defense.

What we all desire is that Europe remains whole, free, at peace, and prosperous.

Sustained success in these endeavors has traditionally been reliant upon the strength of the NATO Alliance, strong bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts, and relationships built on trust.

EUCOM’s mission in Europe has remained the same over its more than 60 years of existence.

We strive to assist Europe to defend its territory, populations, and values. To continue to execute this mission successfully, we must constantly evaluate our priorities and reallocate our resources.

In order to be responsive and ready, we must rely on our European allies.

On behalf of General Breedlove and the EUCOM staff, I would like to say thank you, to the people of Stuttgart and the region, for the warm hospitality you provide to our military members, civilians and their families.

We are all incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to live and work here in Germany -- I cherish that opportunity each and every day.

You know my husband emigrated to the U.S. from Germany when he was a child.

My marriage to him has given me the opportunity to visit Germany many times in the last 35 years, but since his family lives in Northern and Central Germany, until I began my assignment last fall, I had never been to Stuttgart.

I have been very warmly received and look forward to living and working here for the next three years.

I want to thank all of you again for inviting me here this evening to share the U.S. European Command and the U.S. Government views and strategies for keeping Europe, the U.S. and ultimately the world safe and secure.